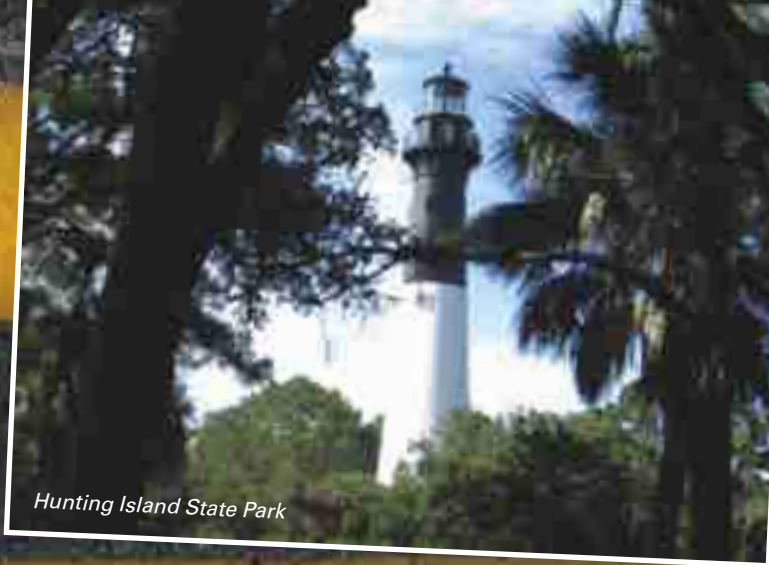




Hamilton Branch State Recreation Area



Hunting Island State Park



Devils Fork State Park

# RVers Find Variety at South Carolina's State Parks

By Lynn Seldon

It started with tent camping. However, as we aged, the earth beneath us grew increasingly hard and eventually gave way to an air mattress then finally to a new RV.

We started by researching the park system on its website—[www.SouthCarolinaParks.com](http://www.SouthCarolinaParks.com)—and found more than 3,000 RV-friendly campsites at over 30 parks across the state. Then with a new Winnebago Outlook 27L, a “Class C” motor home, we set out to discover all that the state parks of South Carolina had to offer.

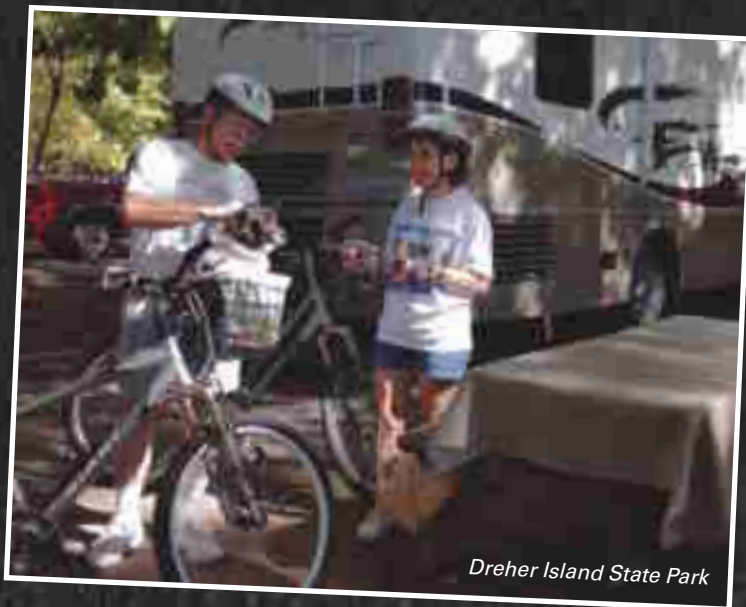
We plotted an adventurous course that took us first to several coastal parks, then to the state's mid-section and finally to the mountains. We found that each park has its own unique geography, amenities and personality; however we found some things (like water and electricity at each site) consistent from park to park. We also found the parks to be consistently clean and staffed with friendly rangers who make a wide range of activities easy and enjoyable for RVers. During what is considered “off peak” seasons, most parks offer a discount which, with moderate South Carolina weather, makes the parks even more of a bargain.

We started in the coastal parks at Huntington Beach State Park. The pristine environment along the Atlantic Ocean makes Huntington Beach the perfect RV experience. Not only do you wake to incredible sunrises over white sand dunes and sea oats, the park is near a number of great attractions like Atalaya, the former winter home and studio of noted sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington.

Farther north, Myrtle Beach State Park is one of the state's most popular RV parks. All the endless fun of Myrtle Beach together with this incredible undeveloped beachfront makes this a truly unusual park. Nearly a mile of beach and over 300 campsites mean that you're putting your RV in one of the country's most sought-after locations. And we all know Myrtle Beach is for families.

Our next stop was south of Charleston at Edisto Beach State Park. Edisto Island is a classic Lowcountry getaway. Edisto Beach State Park offers 110 RV sites and one and one-half miles of beachfront laden with shells. RV sites are just seconds from the maritime forest and acres of salt marsh. An interpretive center adds to the adventure of this natural, beautiful spot.

Hunting Island State Park near Beaufort is also ideal for nature-loving RVers. Over 3,000 acres of salt marsh, four miles of beach, a lagoon and such unexpected treasures as seahorses, barracuda, loggerhead turtles and hundreds of species of birds make this island paradise home. This secluded 5,000-acre barrier island's most popular outing is a climb inside the historic 19th-century lighthouse. Few other states can boast so many great oceanfront campgrounds.



Dreher Island State Park

Then we headed upcountry. Our first stop was in the center of the state—Santee State Park on Lake Marion. Located near I-95, but a world apart, Santee offers more than 150 combined campsites in two lakefront campgrounds, a variety of watersports, nature and bike trails, tennis facilities and some unique over-the-water “pier cabins” for rent.

When we broke camp again, we headed to Kings Mountain State Park, 90 miles north of Columbia, a sprawling park that draws history buffs and nature lovers. At the park, adjacent to Kings Mountain National Military Park, we learned more of the pivotal battle fought here in 1790 that turned the Revolutionary War in favor of the Patriots. A visit to the Living History Farm makes it easy to imagine the difficult lives of those pioneers. With its incredible 35 miles of trails, the site is also popular for hiking or horseback riding.

From Kings Mountain we headed to the South Carolina Upcountry where we quite simply fell in love with the foothills and mountains. Thanks to a string of state parks just off the Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Highway (SC 11), we found park after park that perfectly suited our RV style. We chose Oconee State Park with its great hiking trails and waterfalls as our base. RV sites are near the lake and the trailhead for the 85-mile Foothills Trail. From here we visited Devils Fork State Park on peaceful Lake Jocassee and Table Rock State Park with its trademark rock towering over our RV. Both parks offered RV camping in the cool, wooded mountains.

Sadly we ran out of time before we ran out of parks. We still had dozens to discover in our comfortable rolling home. But, we're already making plans for our next RV trip to South Carolina State Parks. We can't wait!